

353

869



387674

---

# "Settlement in the West."

—♦♦—  
**HENRY O'RIELLY'S "PIONEER MEMORANDA,"**

WITH ILLUSTRATIVE DOCUMENTS AND OTHER RECORDS

Concerning some of the Principal Events in his connection with  
*The First Footprints in the March of Empire Across the American Continent.*

—♦♦—  
Earliest Daily Journalism, Artificial Navigation, Telegraphic Facilities, &c., between  
Eastern and Western States.

(WITHOUT GOVERNMENTAL SUBSIDIES, AND  
BEFORE THE ADVENT OF "MONOPOLIZING RINGS" AND "RAILWAY KINGS.")

(Over 150 Volumes, written and printed, mostly concerning matters in which he  
was measurably engaged during the last Half Century.)

1882.

---

*Am. B. Taylor: sig.  
in various institutions*

*Washington  
D.C.*



# HENRY O'RIELLY'S "PIONEER MEMORANDA,"

WITH ILLUSTRATIVE DOCUMENTS AND OTHER RECORDS

Concerning some of the Principal Events in his connection with

## The First Footprints in the March of Empire across the American Continent.

Earliest Daily Journalism, Artificial Navigation, Telegraphic Facilities, &c., between  
Eastern and Western States.

WITHOUT GOVERNMENTAL SUBSIDIES, and

BEFORE THE ADVENT OF "MONOPOLIZING RINGS" AND "RAILWAY KINGS.")

Over 150 Volumes, written and printed, mostly concerning matters in which he was measurably engaged  
during the last Half-Century.)

### PREFATORY REMARKS—TO CORRESPONDENTS, &c.

INQUIRIES often made by letters to me and otherwise concerning Events and Persons supposed to have been included in my Personal Knowledge during the last Half-Century, induce me to print and send to Correspondents and certain prominent Historical Societies the statement that a CATALOGUE may ere long be made of the whole Contents of the Collection presented by me to the "New York Historical Society," (as shown in the annexed proceedings, &c.?) and that, meantime, the Few Points mentioned in these Prefatory Pages concerning some important Events and Personages may enable Inquirers to see the care taken by me in authenticating (as far as practicable) the Statements in the volumes generally—concerning which some further remarks may be found on the Tenth Page of this "*Preface*" (if these sayings may be thus characterized).

I had long hoped that Circumstances might enable me to present these "Memoranda" in smoother form—but, rough as they are, and such as they are, they are freely given, for the use of inquirers now and hereafter for the "Macaulays" of these and future times concerning the beginning of Civilization "Westward."

It may only be added here, that the Record will show that I have been measurably concerned in most of the "improvements" since I entered on active business life in my twenty-first year as Editor of the earliest *Daily Newspaper* established (1826) between the Hudson and Delaware Rivers and the Pacific Ocean.

New York, Oct. 2, 1882.

HENRY O'RIELLY,  
*Member of the N. Y. Hist. Soc. since 1838.*

### \* New York Historical Society—1860.

HENRY O'RIELLY, Esq. : *My Dear Sir:*—I send you the long-delayed extracts from the Minutes, which you desired, and your Diploma.

I have received the boxes and parcel, as well as your communications. It being a vacation for our Committees, as well as Society, I shall have to beg your indulgence for a more full notice and acknowledgment until we come together again.

Meantime, permit me to renew to you my own expression of the sense I have of the value and importance of your donations; and believe me to be, my dear sir,

Very truly and respectfully yours,

GEO. HENRY MOORE, *Librarian, &c.* [ ]

Library of the N. Y. Historical Society, New York, August 30, 1860.

[ Dr. G. H. Moore is now Supt. of the "Lenox Library." ]

At a stated meeting of the above Society, held at the Library on Tuesday Evening, May 3d, 1859, the Librarian presented and read a letter from Mr. Henry O'Rielly, dated New York, 23 Wall Street, May 3d, 1859, accompanying his donation of Telegraph Documents and Western Mementos. In view of the value and importance of this donation, the Librarian expressed the hope that some special acknowledgment should be made by the Society. Mr. John R. Brodhead thereupon submitted the following Resolution, which was adopted :  
"*Resolved*, That the subject of the proper acknowledgment by the Society of the munificent and most valuable donation which it has just received from Mr. Henry O'Rielly, be referred to the Executive Committee."

At the following stated meeting of the said Society, held at the Library, on Tuesday Evening, June 7, 1859,

Mr. Moore, from the Executive Committee, submitted the following :

The Executive Committee respectfully recommend the following Resolution for adoption by the Society, in view of the very important and valuable contributions made and proposed by Henry O'Rielly, Esq. :

"*Resolved*, That the thanks of the Society are due, and are hereby tendered, to Henry O'Rielly, Esq., for his very interesting and important donations, and that he be and is hereby constituted a Life Member of the Society." The Resolution was adopted unanimously.

(Extracts from the Minutes.)

ANDREW WARNER, *Recording Secretary.*

# Contributions to the New York Historical Society.

January, 1882.

"Harpers' Cyclopædia of American History" (lately issued), gives the following sketch (in its 2d volume, pages 1035-6) concerning Henry O'Reilly's contributions to the "New York Historical Society," of which Society, Dr. Benson J. Lossing (the Editor of that Cyclopædia), has long been a member :

*From "Harpers' Cyclopædia of American History,"*

Henry O'Reilly, one of the most active and public-spirited citizens, was born in Carrickmacross, Province of Ulster, Ireland, Feb. 6, 1806. His father (a merchant) emigrated to America in 1816, and soon afterwards this son was apprenticed to the publisher of the New York *Columbian* (newspaper) to learn the art of printing. The *Columbian* was a staunch advocate of the Erie Canal, and a political supporter of De Witt Clinton as its able champion. The mind of the apprentice was thus early impressed with the importance of measures for the development of the vast resources of the United States—a subject which has inspired much of his activity and zeal in the promotion of public improvements. At the age of seventeen years he became assistant editor of the *New York Patriot*, the organ of the 'People's Party,' which elected De Witt Clinton governor of the State of New York in 1824. When, in 1826, Luther Tucker & Co. established the *Rochester Daily Advertiser*—the first daily newspaper published between the Hudson River and the Pacific Ocean—young O'Reilly, then not twenty-one years of age, was chosen to be its editor. It was a period of great political and social excitement, especially in central New York (see *Anti-Masonic Party*), and, after four years of arduous labor, O'Reilly retired for rest. He resumed his editorial labors there in 1832, and became an active leader in all public enterprises. In 1833, as chairman of the Executive Committee of Rochester on Canal Affairs, he wrote the first memorial presented to the Legislature and the Canal Board, in favor of rebuilding the failing structures of the Erie Canal. He then proposed a judicious plan for the enlargement of the Canal, which, if it had been adopted, might have saved the State millions of dollars. He was a zealous advocate of such Enlargement, and he was chairman of the first State Executive Committee appointed by the first Canal Enlargement Convention in 1837. In that capacity he served many years with great efficiency. In 1838 he was appointed postmaster of Rochester. At the same time his never-weary pen prepared pamphlets and newspaper essays, filled with cogent arguments in favor of reform in the methods of popular Education. In these efforts he was ably seconded by the venerable James Wadsworth, of Genesee; and their joint labors led to the legislation that fashioned the present common-school system of the State of New York. Mr. O'Reilly earnestly advocated the introduction of works on Agriculture into the school-district libraries of the State, and his wise suggestions in his reports as secretary of the State Agricultural Society, almost forty years ago, have been practically carried out in the establishment of State agricultural colleges in every commonwealth in the Union. He was the originator of the 'State Constitutional Association,' which was the means of bringing about the reforms in the constitution of the State of New York in 1846. He was also the originator, at about the same time, of a project for the establishment of a private Telegraph system for a range of about eight thousand miles in length, connecting all sections of the United States east of the Mississippi River. For this purpose he secured the right to the use of all the telegraph patents which had then been granted. In 1853 Mr. O'Reilly was engaged by the State of Iowa to improve the navigation of the Des Moines River, but circumstances caused a suspension of the work. A few years later the railroad interest in the State of New York took an attitude decidedly hostile to the great Erie Canal, a powerful commercial rival. That interest conspired to destroy its credit and to make the people believe that it was the source of burdensome taxation. The completion of its Enlargement was opposed, and a scheme was devised for controlling legislation so as to deprive the people of this great property by its sale to the highest bidder. In the fall of 1859 Mr. O'Reilly sent forth a stirring address to the People of the State on the subject. They were aroused. The 'Clinton League' was formed, with Mr. O'Reilly as chairman, and, by their untiring efforts, this scheme, which, if carried out, would have disgraced the Commonwealth, was frustrated. When the late Civil War broke out he was one of the most active promoters of measures for the preservation of the Union, and was secretary of the 'Society for Promoting the Enlistment of Colored Troops.' He originated, in 1867, an organized movement for reforming and cheapening the operations of the Railroad System of the United States. About 1838 Mr. O'Reilly prepared and published a volume of five hundred pages entitled *Sketches of Rochester, with Incidental Notices of Western New York*. It was the first work of its kind ever published in the interior of the continent. He has deposited with the New York Historical Society, of which he has now (1880) been a member about forty years, almost two hundred volumes, partly in manuscript and partly in print, containing well-arranged documents and other papers relating to the History of important public events in which he has participated. These form authentic materials of inestimable value, especially to the future Historian of the Early Operations of the Canal and Telegraph Systems of the United States."

# HENRY O'RIELLY'S PIONEER MEMORANDA

## WITH DOCUMENTS AND OTHER RECORDS

### SHOWING THE PRINCIPAL EVENTS IN HIS CONNECTION WITH THE

# FIRST FOOTPRINTS IN THE MARCH OF EMPIRE

## ACROSS THE AMERICAN CONTINENT:—

Earliest Daily Journalism, Artificial Navigation, Telegraphic Facilities, &c., between Eastern and Western States.

(WITHOUT GOVERNMENTAL SUBSIDIES, and  
BEFORE THE ADVENT OF "MONOPOLIZING RINGS" AND "RAILWAY KINGS.")

---

## "Settlement in the West."\*

PIONEER DAYS IN WESTERN NEW YORK AND ELSEWHERE IN THE WEST.

(See remarks of William Cullen Bryant and Benson J. Lossing on succeeding pages.)

1. "The past and passing history of 'the West,' and every part and parcel of it, is precious. It will be more and more so as time advances. The transformation of a savage wilderness into a region of culture and civilization, in a period so short, \* \* \* is a most interesting phenomenon in human history."

"We are fortunate in being a New People. Our Historians may begin at the beginning, and complete their tale without being compelled to invoke the aid of superstition or imagination." "Let us be thankful that we are as we are, and that, from being as the small cloud in the West, scarce the compass of a man's hand, the providence of God has raised us up a Powerful Empire, whose realms extend from the East unto the West, from the frozen waters of the North to the clear blue waves and spicy gales of the Tropic Seas; and while we contemplate, with all the pride of a Roman Citizen, the wide domain of our inheritance, let us quietly reflect upon the Seed from which all this mighty harvest has sprung; let us regard Events as they actually were—not judging of their value or importance by what has come after them; and we shall see from what Humble Means, with what unpromising tools, the Destiny of the New World has been wrought."

"The history has an aspect of much higher interest—as an important feature of the Grand Experiment enacting in our Common Country touching the CAPACITY OF MAN FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT."—*North American Review*.

2. "SETTLEMENT then and in that region was different from our modern settlement. What is it now to go to the 'Far West' of Missouri [yea, now, in Palace Cars, and with other palatial comforts and luxuries, across the Continent to the Pacific Ocean]—and how great are the comforts of Railroads and Steamboats, and quick Mails, with Lightning Telegraphy and exemption from Indian Difficulties and other frontier troubles, compared with what the *Settlers of Western New York* had to contend?"

"And where, in the history of mankind, has human energy, enlightened energy, individual energy, *Yankee energy*, (for that word 'Yankee' embodies a volume of meaning) been more signally displayed?"

"The facts, plainly stated, may be useful to the Historian, who shall hereafter speak of that remarkable Chapter in the World's History—the *First Half-Century of Western New York*. \* \* \* More of the History of our Confederacy hinges on the *Progress of Western New York* than most of us imagine."—*North American Review*—1846.

3. "That which constitutes *History*, PROPERLY SO CALLED, is in great part omitted from works on the subject. Only of late years have Historians commenced giving us, in any considerable quantity, the truly valuable information. As in past ages the King was everything and the People nothing, so, in past Histories, the doings of the King fill the entire picture, to which the National Life forms but an obscure background—while only *now*, when the welfare of Nations, rather than of Rulers, is becoming the dominant idea, are Historians beginning to occupy themselves with the phenomena of Social Progress. That which it really concerns us to know, is the Natural History of Society. We want all facts which help us to understand *how a Nation has grown and organized itself*. Among these, let us of course have an account of its Government, with as little as may be of gossip about the men who officered it, and as much as possible about the structure, principles, methods, prejudices, corruptions, &c., which it exhibited; and let this account not only include the nature and actions of the Central Government, but also those of Local Governments, down to the minutest ramifications."—*Herbert Spencer*, in "*Education, Intellectual, Moral and Physical*."

\* This ("Settlement in the West, or Sketches of Rochester and Western New York") is the title of the volume written by Henry O'RIELLY in 1837-8. (Printed then by the HARPERS in New York, although published by William Alling of Rochester, where O'R. then lived.)

# "Growth of our Country," as indicated by the Spread of Journalism. To William Cullen Bryant,

*Editor of the "Evening Post," and Vice-President of the "New York Historical Society,"*

this volume of Henry O'Rielly's "Pioneer Memoranda," concerning Journalistic and other Progress in "Western Settlement," is

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

in Memory of the Recognition which Mr. Bryant (then Assistant, but soon afterwards and for long years Chief, Editor of that Metropolitan Journal) bestowed more than Half a Century ago upon the Earliest Effort in establishing a *Daily Newspaper* in the Interior of the American Continent—between the Atlantic waters and the Pacific Ocean—of which Henry O'Rielly was the Editor.\* Mr. Bryant then substantially declaring (in a leading Editorial of 1826, herewith copied) that the establishment of a *Daily* print so far "westward" as Rochester was one of the most remarkable Events showing the extraordinary "Growth of our Country."

HENRY O'RIELLY,

Editor of the *Rochester Daily Advertiser*—1826, &c.

1826.

(From the *New York Evening Post*, of October 31, 1826.)

## "Growth of our Country.

"We have received the first number of a *Daily Paper*, printed at Rochester, in this State, entitled the *Rochester Daily Advertiser*. The Editor speaks with confidence of his success, and adverts to the unexpected extent of his advertising patronage. *Nothing can show, in a more striking point of view, the rapid increase of our Population and internal Commerce,* than the fact, that this place, which within a few years was a wilderness, is now enabled, by the number of its Inhabitants and the activity of its Trade, to support a *Daily Paper*."

## Forty Years Later—1866.

When referring in 1866 forty years afterwards to these matters mentioning and quoting its original notice of the establishment of the *Rochester Daily Advertiser* the *Evening Post*, still under the editorial direction of Mr. Bryant, said :

"The issue of that *daily newspaper* marked an *era in the history of the Western Press*. Rochester was one of the places that earliest felt the impulse of the Canal (or Internal Improvement) System—the lowly village sprang into city dimensions and prosperity with a degree of vigor at that time unequalled. The Erie Canal—completed only at the close of the previous year, though for two or three years partly in operation—quickly developed the water-power, in milling operations, which has rendered Rochester celebrated as the source of the 'Genesee Flour.' Entering early and largely into the Forwarding Business, the Rochester People for many years controlled the greatest portion of the vessels engaged in the Canal Trade, and exercised a strong influence on all questions concerning *Internal Improvements*. The advance of Rochester in some other respects was scarcely less remarkable, though the growth of Chicago and other western places soon afterwards threw it completely into the shade."

"In nothing is 'change' more remarkable than in the history of the Press since the *Rochester Daily Advertiser* was established," continued the *Evening Post* in 1866—which journal said that, in 1826, the aggregate daily circulation of all the daily newspapers in America scarcely equalled the quantity of printed matter (considering the increased size of newspapers) now struck off in three hours by one of Hoe's ten-cylinder presses in some of the New York printing offices. \* \* \* The original publisher of the *Rochester Daily Advertiser* was Luther Tucker,\* and the editor Henry O'Rielly. The former is now (1866) as he has been for more than thirty years, editor of the *Collator and Country Gentleman*—the latter has been connected with the Telegraph system since its commencement, and resides in New York.

\* The interesting statements of the *New York Evening Post* are incorrect in only one point, and that is in connection with the publication of the *Pioneer Western Daily*. The publishers were "Luther Tucker & Co.," in Rochester—the "Company" being Henry C. Sleight, of the Long Island *Farmer*, at Jamaica, L. I., where the firm was known as "Sleight & Tucker." Mr. Sleight conceived the plan, and furnished the pecuniary means, with men and material for carrying it into effect, Mr. O'Rielly being engaged as Editor—as stated in Mr. Tucker's letter of Sept., 1827, and in Mr. Sleight's letters of 1873 and 1874, when replying to Mr. O'R.'s inquiries—as shown in the correspondence placed by Mr. O'R. in the New York Historical Society's Library, among the many documents and other original papers given by him to the Society—his desire being that justice should be done to Mr. Sleight for his sagacity and liberality in originating the enterprise and in sustaining it till success rendered it self-sustaining—a measure of justice to which Mr. Sleight (dately deceased, in his 85th year) is particularly entitled, as he actually lost money, instead of profiting by an enterprise considered so hazardous in those "early days of western progress."—(Vide O'Rielly's Sketch of Pioneer Daily Journalism Westward, in N. Y. Historical Library.)



1834-1860.

## Internal Navigation—Between the Atlantic and our Inland Seas.

### DEDICATION OF THE VOLUMES ON THAT SUBJECT.

concerning Three of the Most Important Epochs in the History of Artificial Navigation between the Atlantic Ocean and the vast Chain of Lakes, through the State of New York—

#### TO THE MEMORY OF GOVERNOR WASHINGTON HUNT.\*

one of the Earliest Friends of the "Rebuilding and Enlargement of the Erie Canal," whose letters to Henry O'Reilly, as well as his official and other papers, including Speeches and Acts in Popular Conventions, evince the interest with which he and other Statesmen and the Public generally in this Commonwealth (including the venerable *Jesse Hawley*, the earliest writer who publicly advocated the original "*Overland Erie Canal*"), regarded the Policy of *Speedily Enlarging and Rebuilding* that Great Waterway, and *Preserving it For Ever as the Property of the People of the State of New York*, instead of allowing it to be Sacrificed to Speculators, (as was the fate of the Public Works of Pennsylvania,) indicated briefly by his communications concerning the successful operations of the "Clinton League."\*

#### HENRY O'RIELLY,

Chairman for several years of the First Executive Committee appointed by the Citizens of Rochester and by the First State Convention for Promoting and Expediting the Rebuilding and Enlargement of the Canal connecting the Atlantic with our Inland Seas—and also Chairman of the Clinton League.

1859-60.

\*The popular enthusiasm and the practical results, consequent on these Internal Improvement proceedings of the Clinton League, may be measurably inferred from the following letters (among other correspondence), from a source so distinguished as Governor Washington Hunt, concerning the Salvation of the New York Canal System, from sale and sacrifice, as perpetrated in Pennsylvania:

LOCKPORT, Nov. 28, 1859.

"My dear Sir:

"All honor to the Clinton League! Under your skillful guidance, it has accomplished a grand and noble purpose. It has interposed, in the barren strife of parties, to bring forth practical results and protect the true interests of the State. I am persuaded that you never rendered a more valuable public service than in coming forward at this juncture to save the Canal from the hostile influences which have combined against it. Mainly by your efforts we have a Legislature which cannot abandon the Enlargement Policy without a flagrant violation of pledges. A majority of the members come in under professions which I trust they dare not disregard. This is a most important point gained by the Movement which derived so much of its energy from your active zeal and able expositions of the truth.

"Having carried all the outposts, the main battle remains to be fought and won. Of course, much effort will be made to mislead the Legislature and prevent such action as the emergency requires. We must continue to occupy the field until the crowning triumph is secured. It seems to me that you ought to spend some time in Albany, backed up by some other members of the Committee, to see that strong appeals and useful information are placed before the Legislature, from the very opening of the session. I make these suggestions off-hand for your consideration.

"Accept my thanks for what you have already done, and I hope you will persevere in the good work until we are able to proclaim from the house-tops that it is finished.

"Believe me, yours truly,

W. HUNT.

"HENRY O'RIELLY, Esq."

(Another of the letters from Ex-Governor WASHINGTON HUNT to HENRY O'RIELLY dated)

LOCKPORT, Feb. 7, 1860.

"My dear Sir—All honor to the Clinton League! It makes very strong and thorough work. And to you—its guiding, animating spirit—I feel that we are all under lasting obligations. Your plan of operations has been very practical and effective. I do not think a good cause was ever better sustained than this has been by the way of fact and argument which you have placed before the people. I need not say how fully my opinions accord with yours in regard to the justice and expediency of the proposed legislation. The railroad interest has been placed in direct conflict with the rights of our own people. It is assumed, I perceive, that the proposed *pro rata law* will deprive the roads of the western trade. Not at all. They will be free to carry as cheap as they please. But the law (bill) virtually enjoins them to carry for a New York man as cheap as for a citizen of Ohio or Indiana. Upon every principle of right and policy, they are bound to do this, and I hope to see the measure carried out by the Legislature. It must be done.

"To you a large part of the honor will be due. You are doing a great public service, which will be remembered with gratitude. My whole heart is with you in the work.

"Yours truly,

W. HUNT.

"HENRY O'RIELLY, Esq., New York."

# Constitutional and Statutory Reform—1843, &c.

1. "It is the distinguishing glory of the People of New York, that they have been the first to commence the *Movement of Reform*—an example which, we have no doubt, will be ultimately followed by every State in the Union," said the National (Washington) *Democrat* in *Review* in December, 1843. (And the Reforms proposed by the New York State Constitutional Association of 1843-6, were indeed quickly emulated in the Constitutions and Laws of almost every State in the Union.)

2. "The movement which resulted in the adoption of the Constitution of 1846, in the State of New York, was in truth a *Revolution*, radical and sweeping, in Law, in Finance, and in Administration—a *Revolution*, such as, in no other country less prosperous or less flexible than ours, could have been accomplished without a serious and probably a bloody struggle," said *Theodore Sedgwick*, in "Harpers," about ten years after the "New Constitution" (of 1846) was adopted.

3. "The changes introduced by it are not only more numerous than ever before made at any one time, but far more important," said Attorney-General Butler, in his Discourse before the "*New York Historical Society*" in 1846, when the New Constitution went into force.

4. "The Constitution of '46, although possessing great faults, was a great improvement upon any which had preceded it," wrote Ex-Lieut. Governor *Henry R. Selden* in Sept. 1877—adding, "I think no Revolution of equal importance was ever before accomplished so quietly."

5. As Charles O'Connor, late Vice-President of the New York Historical Society, was a Member of the State Convention which formed the present Constitution, (that of "1846") Henry O'Reilly transmitted to him, many years ago, (1852,) copies of several documents about Constitutional Reform, &c., like those now deposited in the New York Historical Society's Library; and received, in reply, a letter, of which the following is a copy of the first paragraph:

"Henry O'Reilly, Esq. My dear Sir—Please to accept my sincere thanks for the valuable documents with which you have favored me. They record events and actions which have greatly influenced our condition as a People, and add to the stock of materials hereafter to be combined by some able hand in a Constitutional History of the Republic."

Yours truly,

CH. O'CONNOR.

---

1843-6, &c.

## Mr. Bryant on "Organization" for Reform of Constitutions and Laws.

As the testimony of Mr. Bryant has been several times referred to in these "Pioneer Memoranda," and as the only correct account of the Constitutional Reform Association of 1843-6 is contained in the Documents and Statements which Mr. O'Reilly contributes to the "New York Historical Society's Library," it may be well to quote the letter (most emphatic, though brief) which Mr. Bryant sent in reply to Mr. O'R.'s announcement that he (Mr. B.) had been elected first Vice-President of the Organization thus effected for consummating the "overthrow of the Old Constitution, and the establishment of the New Constitution (of 1846)," towards which the *Evening Post* contributed so largely. Hence, Mr. Bryant's letter of 1843 is herewith appended:

(Letter from Mr. Bryant, of the New York *Evening Post*.)

New York, Aug. 14, 1843.

"Gentlemen—The importance of the objects for which your Association is established and the necessity of *Organization* to accomplish them, induce me to depart from my usual practice in such cases, and to accept the appointment of Vice-President which the members have done me the honor of offering me.

I am, gentlemen, very respectfully yours.

W. C. BRYANT.

"Messrs. Chas. S. Benton, Henry W. Strong, Hiram McColhum, Hugh T. Brooks, Henry R. Selden, R. H. Williams, George W. Clinton, Lorenzo Sherwood, Hugh O'Reilly." [O'R. proposed the "Organization," and acted as Secretary, Editor, &c., in aiding to effect it.]

---

## Letter from PARKE GODWIN, long an associate of Mr. Bryant.

ROSLYN, LONG ISLAND, Sept. 12, 1877.

My dear Mr. O'Reilly:

"Your plan for preserving the names of those who begun and carried forward the great Constitutional Reform, to which your letter refers, seems to me admirable. I was then just beginning my editorial life in the New York *Evening Post*; but I remember with what profound and ardent interest I watched the progress of the Movement, and helped it along in such way as I could. Most of the men who were then prominent have passed away; but their labors deserve to be held in everlasting remembrance. What giants of public polity, as well as of personal ability, there were in those days! Wright, Hoffman, Young, Cambreling, Sherwood and others—how their names still 'smell sweet and blossom in the dust!' It must be a grand memory for you to have been associated with them, and, with their aid, to have accomplished so much! Yours, very truly,

PARKE GODWIN."

(1845-59-60.)

# O'Reilly's Telegraph Documents:

AN IMPARTIAL COLLECTION OF PAPERS CONCERNING THE

## ORIGIN OF THE TELEGRAPH SYSTEM.

Designed to include every attainable printed statement, *pro* and *con*, respecting the Range of Telegraph Lines, eight thousand miles in extent, whereby HENRY O'REILLY first electrically connected the United



States, before the organization of States on our Pacific Coast:—(the ordinary BUSINESS OF A GOVERNMENT, accomplished, amid extraordinary difficulties, by PRIVATE ENTERPRISE, without Governmental bounties.)

### CONTAINING—AMONG OTHER MATTERS—

- The original proposals of Henry O'Reilly to the Public, for extending the Telegraph System, by individual enterprise:—Most People then supposing that the Telegraph System could not be established without Governmental Aid.
- Statements, Opinions and Decisions, from the Courts, the Press, and the Public Councils.—
- Testimony of prominent Electricians, Telegraphers, Inventors and Patentees.—
- The Telegraph Laws of various States, passed in accordance with O'Reilly's Memorials and suggestions, With various accounts of Electric Discoveries, and Statements from Sundry Sources, concerning different modes of applying Electricity for telegraphic purposes.—
- As such accounts were elicited by, or connected with, the controversies which have convulsed the Telegraph System nearly from the time of its origin in America—from the date of the attempt made by the Morse Patentees in 1846 to repudiate their Contract with Henry O'Reilly—commonly known in the Courts and otherwise as the "*O'Reilly Contract*," concerning Telegraph Lines built by him—

### ON DIFFERENT SECTIONS OF WHICH LINES

Were used [what are called] the "*Morse*" Electro-Magnetic and the "*Bain*" Electro-Chemical Telegraphic Instruments—and temporarily the "*House*" Printing, and the "*Barnes*" Columbian Telegraph Instruments—under O'Reilly's contracts or agreements with the respective Inventors or Patentees:—

### WHICH LINES WERE BY O'REILLY STYLED

- The "*Atlantic, Lake and Mississippi Telegraph Range*," or "*First Division of the Atlantic and Pacific Telegraph*,"—though early named by his opponents, and soon after popularly known under the general title of, the "*O'Reilly Lines*,"—the name originally given (derisively, of course) by owners of Morse Patents:—
- Said *Range of Lines* having also been known *partly*, at different times and in various regions, as National Lines, Union Lines, Morse Lines, Columbian Lines, Bain Lines, Merchant Lines, People's Lines, and by other similar designations; and also by sundry local names, such as the Atlantic and Ohio Lines, the Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and Louisville, and Nashville, New Orleans, and St. Louis Lines, the Tusculum, Memphis and Vicksburg Lines, the Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa Lines, the Ohio and Mississippi Lines, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois Lines, Lake Lines, Illinois and Mississippi Lines, Chicago and St. Louis Lines, Wabash Valley Lines, New York State Lines, New York and New England Telegraph Lines, &c., &c.—but the whole Range, by whatever names any of the parts have been or may be known, having formed the FIRST RANGE OF TELEGRAPH LINES which connected in Electric Unity the different Sections of the United States—Southern, Northern, Eastern and Western—between the Atlantic, the Lakes, and the Mississippi—between the British American Provinces and the Mexican Gulf. \* \* \* \*
- About 100 VOLUMES—mostly printed, or prepared for my private use, in connection with controversies, through the Courts and before the Public, affecting the Legal and Equitable Rights of Electricians, Inventors, Constructors, and the Community, since the commencement of Telegraphing in America.
- Arranged so as to include *every attainable statement from or on behalf of his former competitors and opponents*—that "*the truth, and the whole truth*," may be known, as far as publications collected from all sources, however hostile to himself, can aid in elucidating the facts concerning the Origin of the American Telegraph System—on Lines built by others as well as himself—
- By HENRY O'REILLY, whose Correspondence and other Manuscripts connected with the early Extension of Telegraph Lines through the United States, may thus be consulted by parties desiring particular information concerning the Telegraph System which First electrically connected the United States before the organization of State Sovereignties, on our Pacific Coast.—

PRESENTED TO THE NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY,—MAY, 1859.

"Nothing extenuate, nor ought set down in malice."

### \* ORIGIN OF THE "WESTERN UNION TELEGRAPH COMPANY."

When a certain Telegraph Line was contemplated several years ago, as an adjunct of a Commercial Enterprise, some facts were furnished by me, on request of a prominent Director, with a statement that:

"Annexed to this proposition are sundry documents—duplicates of some few of those in the Historical Society's 'Telegraph Collection' showing how, when Telegraphing on long lines was yet an untried experiment, I originally addressed the American People in 1845 concerning the extension of the Telegraph System through the United States, *by private or corporate enterprise rather than by governmental power* and showing likewise the rapidity wherewith I more than fulfilled all that I originally proposed, by constructing and organizing the Great Telegraph Range of about 8,000 miles whereby the different sections of the United States (as they then existed) were connected in electric intercourse *the longest and widest Telegraph Range then in the world*—at a time when *not a solitary capitalist in this great Commercial Metropolis, not even the rich kindred of Professor Morse, would risk a single dollar in extending the Lightning from Baltimore, where the National Government ended its 'little forty-mile experimental line from Washington'*—the Pioneer Telegraph Range of Lines which I thus organized amid the troubles of early years (out of which Range of Lines others made millions), afterwards forming the *chief basis* of the colossal Lightning Power now known as the '*Western Union Telegraph Company*.'"



---

“Settlement in the West.”

---